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MEMORIAL ADDRESS

ON THE

LIFE, CHARACTER, AND SERVICES

OF

HORATIO SEYMOUR

DELIVERED AT THE

CAPITOL, APRIL 14, 1886

UPON INVITATION OF THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY
OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

BY

ERASTUS BROOKS

"Their lives are best who study most to become as good as possible, and theirs the most enjoyable who feel that they are constantly progressing in virtue. . . . I have ever aimed at the improvement of those who have associated with me."—*Socrates, near the close of his life.*

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Mr. President, Senators, Members of Assembly, Ladies, and Gentlemen:

The first thought as we meet this evening to commemorate the life and services of Horatio Seymour, is the thanks due from me to the Senate and Assembly in the choice named in their joint resolution. Whether due to old and long service in the Legislature and State, to my knowledge of the man in whose behalf I am to speak, or to any cause whatever, I tender my sincere thanks to your Joint Committee for their suggestion of my name, and to the members of the two Houses for the approval of their choice.

The words I have written are historical and personal—of the State largely, and of the man as part of the State—and the necessary abridgment of what in justice is due to this place, and this occasion, has been the real task in my labor of love.

Horatio Seymour was born at Pompey, Onondaga County, May 31, 1810; lived at Deerfield from 1817 to the time of his death; was at the Oxford Academy at the age of ten years; at Hobart College, Geneva, for four years; then at the Military Academy in Middletown, Conn., with the Governor of Connecticut, of the same name and blood; a student-at-law under the rare teaching of Greene C. Bronson and Samuel Beardsley. This young man, upon being admitted to practice at the bar, at once became distinguished for ability, delicacy, and refinement. It was these qualities that won the

heart of Mary Bleecker, of Albany, a name associated with the most accomplished families of the State.

The death of Mrs. Seymour, twenty days after the death of her husband, is one of those events of life and death which in the order of an all-wise Providence it would be unbecoming in us to question or discuss. We pause just here to say, that for half a century and more, united in their lives, in the time of death they were not long separated. The spirit of the manly man had not long to wait the coming of the loving wife. They were buried from the same church, placed in the same grave, followed by the same mourners, and with old age, infirmity, the tired mind, the weary body, the sickness unto death, who of us, feeling the failing and fainting seen in the last shadows of life would care to live on? These two at least were ready for the summons. With them to die on earth was to reach immortality in Heaven. Death, too, was welcome for the double reason that the spirit was free and there was no more bodily pain. They had each long enjoyed what we all desire and most need in our homes—domestic repose within, and without what belongs to cultivation, growth, beauty, and contentment. Deerfield was for both husband and wife the old-school home, the old-school life, and the old-school manners; and these were in practice social grace, sincere expressions of opinion, and toleration of all differences in faith or party.

Governor Seymour's ancestors were distinguished for four generations either in the primitive history of the country or in the war of the Revolution. His grandfather, Moses Seymour, took a prominent part in the war for independence, and especially at the surrender of Burgoyne. His uncle, of the same name, was for twelve years a Senator in Congress from the State of

Vermont; and of the sons of Major Seymour, two were High Sheriffs, one a financier and bank president, and another a State Representative and Senator, and a Canal Commissioner in New York. A cousin represented the State of Connecticut in Congress, was Minister to Russia, Judge of the Superior Court, and Governor of the State. Still another Seymour was a general in the United States Army.

Among his maternal ancestry was the niece of Colonel Ledyard, in command when Arnold, in 1781, directing the Tories and British, destroyed the town of Groton by fire. Ledyard was killed after surrendering his sword in person to the Tory miscreant, Major Broomfield, from the colony of New Jersey.

Governor Seymour was also one of the Cincinnati, and gained this distinction as a descendant of Colonel Forman. Henry Seymour was also a colleague of De Witt Clinton, Canal Commissioner, Member of the Council of Appointment, Representative, Senator, and President of the Farmer's Loan and Trust Company, all honorable positions, and all most honorably filled. The settlers of Onondaga in that day were ready to mortgage their farms to endow the academy where young Seymour received his first education. Time will not permit the record of young Seymour's student life at Oxford, Hobart College, nor elsewhere. The distinguished sculptor, Palmer, of Albany; Elliot, the artist; and the Sedgewicks, Litchfields, Marshes, Masons, and Jeromes were at the same academy.

In the Military School in Connecticut Captain Partridge was his teacher, and the disciplinarian of himself and of his cousin the Governor of Connecticut.

Governor Seymour's Death.

I pass rapidly from ancestry, birth, and student life to the one great event which follows in the order of nature—the summons and presence of death. On the evening of February 12, 1886, as the clock struck ten, Horatio Seymour expired at the residence of his sister, Mrs. Roscoe Conkling, in the city of Utica. The last stroke of the clock told the moment when the pulse, which had long been feeble, ceased to beat.

In his last illness he enjoyed what we all covet in the approaching hours of dissolution, freedom from bodily pain, and our friend entered into rest as gently as the setting sun passes from human observation. For six hours and more he had been failing in strength, and as the end came, or very near it, he was in the presence, and on earth for the last time, of his long invalid and sorrowing wife. The time had come when the period allotted to human existence had been fulfilled. What is called cerebral effusion—the usual process or cause of decay and death in old age—gave signs of the rapid change; but let me say just here, that old as Governor Seymour was, death was hastened by one of the common infirmities of our restless American character. The first notable summons came from a sunstroke in the summer of 1876, when he was in service as the path-master of his own town.

If he had ever coveted public office in town, county, State, or nation, it was this humble place where there was to him no compensation other than the advantage of good roads for all who travelled upon them. And those of you who live in the country know what good roads mean alike for man and beast. The path-master at Deerfield secured through his office one of the

economies and comforts of life. The oaths registered on earth, I will not say in Heaven, over bad roads, if not as many as the stars in number, must, I fancy, be at least as many as the obstructions upon the common highway. Governor Seymour, as a painstaking, patient roadmaster, received not cursing but blessing for his faithful work at home.

It is, as we know, some of the little things of domestic life, belonging to home and neighborhood, personal life and citizenship, that often reveal to us what real manhood is and means. In all these relations Horatio Seymour was conspicuous as neighbor, citizen, friend, and man. I recall two of many reminiscences at his funeral: On either side of the casket were formed sixty orphan girls, with four Sisters of Charity and the same number of boys from St. Vincent's Protectorate. The domestics of his farm and home collecting around his bier to manifest their love for the man, placed upon his coffin sprigs of pine and hemlock, gathered from the trees which had stood as sentinels from manhood to old age. These were all that had a green life in the cold gray winter of 1886, and many of these sentinels of nature, planted by his own hands, survive the life of him who gave them plant and watched their growth and beauty. They still live, but not more than the memory of the unselfish man whose high estate and noble example will remain in the minds and hearts of the thoughtful people of the commonwealth.

One fact more of the remote causes of Governor Seymour's death. The end came, it is true, of old age —if to be born May 31, 1810, and to be dead February 12th, 1886, really means old age. But old age, as we call it, is not to be counted alone by the years we live, but by the work we perform. Governor Seymour

hastened his own end by the sunstroke I have named, though it came nearly ten years before his death. It gave him frequent pain in the heart, vertigo in the head, and at times an unsteady motion upon his feet. In the canvass for Governor Tilden he had worked with great diligence. In 1880 he suffered from congestion of the lungs and acute inflammation, and escaped death only after the most careful nursing and the wisest medical attendance. Placing very much less value upon his own life than was placed upon it by his friends, he was persuaded to take part in the canvass for General Hancock, and spoke for him at Utica, Canajoharie, and finally, after a most urgent appeal, on one of the cold, stormy, and trying November days, at Watertown. He was warned not to go by his physician, but he said, "I must go; for I cannot abandon my friends in their hour of need, even if I die in consequence."

This, gentlemen, may seem to you the evidence of strong partisanship, and if you will qualify this conclusion by the fact that it was also the evidence of strong friendship, and strong devotion to the cause which he had adhered to all his life, then the conclusion is a just one. But just here let me add, that, as the Governor of the State, as the presiding officer of the Assembly, as one of its members for three years, as the Mayor of Utica, or in any official position or private trust, Governor Seymour "never gave up to party what was meant for mankind."

Home and Religious Life.

Governor Seymour added to these qualities of public service a real love of home and family life. He found real pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge as revealed to him in books and in the study of the greater volume

of nature. His three hundred acres of land, part of it on the banks of the Mohawk, was his home. He possessed also a keen sense of the pleasures of the chase. He was not only at home in the Adirondacks, the woods of Northern New York, on the prairies of the West, in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and the ~~Lower~~ Mississippi, but others shared with him in these enjoyments. His house was built more for comfort and space than for show or ornament. His tastes were simple and for mental improvement rather than for indulgence in the art decorations so common in our city life. As the chief of a great party he received as many blows as any man who ever held public office. But nowhere in attack or defence can you find calumny, coarseness of expression, or bitterness of manner toward those with whom he differed. I think I may say in this distinguished presence, and with an assured concurrence of opinion from those whose votes originated and directed this commemoration of his life, character, services, and death, that Horatio Seymour, in all that words in their best sense mean, was a patriot, a statesman, and a true Christian gentleman. And by patriotism I mean not only one who loves and faithfully serves his country, but the patriotism which Lord Bolingbroke most aptly defined as "founded in great principles and supported by great virtues."

In his employment of public affairs, changing but a single word, the words of the poet apply to him:

> "Statesman, yet friend to truth: of soul sincere,
> In action faithful and in honor clear;
> Who broke no promise, served no private end;
> Who sought no title and who lost no friend."

In the third quality of character which I have assigned to him, if I may speak of the faith in which he

believed, and which was illustrated at home and for many years in very many Diocesan Conventions in the State and in the nation, it rested upon true grace and real knowledge. For the State and for the people at large it meant not only good-will among men; but in his own personal life "whatsoever was true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report."

His attachments to his own Christian faith came in the double title of inheritance and his own free will. The office long held by his father as Warden of Trinity Church, in Utica, was held by himself at the time of his death, and long before.

In this faith his Christian life was founded upon that large charity which is neither pretentious nor censorious, exclusive nor dogmatic. His private life I see illustrated in that grand character whose teaching rested not so much upon gifts, nor prophecies, nor mysteries, as upon that abiding faith and hope which declared, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." In this thought he followed, next to Christ, the master-spirit of the New Testament.

He may not have had all the boldness of this master-spirit, nor his long-suffering, nor his physical courage, nor intense force; but he united great gentleness with great power and courage in maintaining his convictions. In both faith and practice he was a true man, and as near as our many human infirmities will permit, and from which he was not exempt, we see in him

"The great example of a blameless life."

In the Church as a layman, as well as in the State as a leader and counsellor, he took no step backward.

A reverend friend in all these years of his life says of him:

"In the councils of the Church he was always at home; more at home, I believe, than in any political assemblies; and no layman ever appeared to greater advantage in our General Conventions, though he was too modest to speak as often as we wanted him, and sometimes as I know, sitting by his side in the same delegation, it was very difficult to get him up on his feet. But when he did speak, every eye was fastened on him, every ear was intent not to lose a single word, and every heart throbbed with emotions of gratitude for the learning and wisdom which flowed from his lips. His manners were those of a shepherd and pastor, and he would have made a splendid Vicar of Wakefield."

Evidence of Public Respect.

The Governor of the State in suggesting suitable action by the Legislature, which in this joint meeting is promptly responded to, reminded the people of Governor Seymour's "conspicuous fidelity, signal ability, and conscientious devotion to the public good." And your own just and generous words were the unanimous resolve:

"That in the death of Horatio Seymour the State has lost one of its most eminent citizens, wisest counsellors, and truest friends. He was studious in habit, wise in council, generous in action, pure in thought, gentle in spirit, courteous in manner. By his learning, eloquence, statesmanship, patriotic devotion to duty, and to the best interests of the State, nation, and his fellowmen, he had won the confidence, admiration, and love of all. He was respected, honored, and cherished. His life is an inspiring example and a priceless legacy."

In this large assembly of the officers of the State, judicial, and by election and selection ; of Senators and Assemblymen, representing at large the people of the State, the commonwealth responds to this general voice of its chosen fellow-citizens.

The President of the United States, Governors of States in their official stations, legislators in their places of public trust, friends without number, Sisters of Charity, orphans left to the care of the State or friendly hands, prisoners in their prison-house, all from the church to the platform, in historical meetings and private assemblies, have concurred in your words of public praise. And why? if I may ask the question. Simply because always, to the honor of human nature,

> "only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

And now in public affairs let me ask, Was Horatio Seymour worthy of all these honors? This is a question I shall try to answer ; but first let me say that no devotee of saints or gods can have a greater dislike than I have to what is called man-worship. We worship only God. We honor eminence of position where the possessor is worthy of the place he fills. We respect dignity, excellence, moral worth, and purity of purpose and life. This is not worship, and within these limits is the extent of our regard for the man whose virtues the State he served loved, and now commemorates. To be equal to any station which he filled, or to which his friends aspired for him, was his purpose ; but with him always the true "post of honor was the private station," more than the love of any public service.

I recall places almost without number which he de-

clined to fill: once as a foreign ambassador under President Pierce; once as United States Commissioner to settle the troubles with Kansas; conspicuously, and more than once, as the candidate for President of the United States, as Governor of the State, and as Senator in Congress. Once he accepted the nomination for the first of these offices, and led the forlorn hope in his own defeat, and naturally enough at the time, with General Grant as his opponent. For nearly a week the National Convention of 1868, and I speak as one of its members, had balloted in vain, and only the name of Seymour, of New York, could in the end bring order and harmony out of prolonged discord and confusion. I have shared in many conventions and nominations, but never before in one which in its final work was so enthusiastic. It was destiny that the victorious soldier of the war for the nation should win the field against the accomplished civilian of a single State, and this would have been true had Governor Seymour's preferred candidate, Salmon P. Chase, received the nomination, which he was quite ready to accept. Governor Seymour in pronouncing in the face of all the responses of party and people, his own reluctant consent, said at the time to his friends in private that he had made the greatest mistake of his life. And this, except in serving others, was the end of Governor Seymour's acceptance of any political office.

In this commonwealth he was for forty years the conspicuous member of his own party, and in statesmanship the equal of any of his predecessors in office. In a large sense he was, in its new life, the founder of his party in the State; and I speak now as one who as long as the old Whig party lived, or gave signs of life, followed its standard, and left it only when personal di-

visions and State separations and sectional ambitions and jealousies secured its doom.

Among Governor Seymour's predecessors there may have been bolder, craftier, and in extensive literature and scholarship more conspicuous men.

The precise Jeffersonian example to which I have alluded in his life is embodied, first, in the faith that in all that really means the country's welfare "we are all Democrats and we are all Republicans." Secondly, That in leading principles—political or religious—and I think I may say in this day of marvellous independence of faith—in all the forms of what is called Christian, agnostic, theistic, deistic, or positivist faith—that "error of opinion ceases to be dangerous when reason is left to combat it." It may take time for the long battle to be fought out, but in the end the right will prevail.

Character, Courage, and Independence.

When Governor of the State he vetoed a bill as extreme as the first Prohibitory Law of Maine; and his reasons were that the act directed unreasonable searches of the dwellings of citizens, deprived persons of their property, forfeited it when seized, imposed inquisitorial examinations, and was, in brief, an unjust and odious enactment. Through education, morality, and religion he believed that temperance must be secured. This veto message prevented his re-election, and in the divided parties of the time Myron H. Clarke, by a plurality of three hundred and nine votes, was made Governor. The previous defeat came from his warm Whig friend, Governor Hunt, one of the truest men ever in the State service, and this time it was effected by a union of the Whig party with the anti-rent party, and two hundred and sixty votes elected the Whig candidate.

Governor Seymour had a dread of office-seeking at any age, and especially of office-holding in old age. He believed, however, in the wisdom of a busy and useful life to the end of one's full time on earth ; and in this he practised all he preached. In his last interview with Governor Marcy, the latter said to him as to a personal friend : " I trust that I may so pass the rest of my days as not to show an indifference to the interests of the country and to the party that has made me twice a cabinet minister, a United States Senator, Governor, and Judge, or to my friends. After so much let me not now seem to turn my back upon the world."

This problem, so hard to solve for so many in old age, Providence soon solved for our friend's friend. Lying upon his sofa, with a book in his hand, his heart ceased to beat. In relating the end of a very long public life, Governor Seymour said : " When I see tottering old men upon the brink of the grave engaged in an unseemly scramble for office, I am always reminded of Holbein's picture of the 'Dance of Death.' It shall never be said of me that I took part in such a cotillon. I shall never be a figure in such a picture."

It was Martin van Buren, when at the head of the United States State Department, who suggested to Governor Marcy the name of Seymour for his Military Secretary, and at once this service ripened into life-long friendship. In the last interview of Marcy with Seymour, the retired statesman suggested to his friend continued work in the development of the topography of the State and in his efforts for national reconciliation, for an unbroken union of the States, resting both upon constitutional liberty and the limitations of federal powers defined in the intent, purpose, and spirit of the Constitution itself. The two subjects of State Topog-

raphy and State History he blended into one, and these written papers make him, without exaggeration, a public benefactor. The physical peculiarities of this State have, and have had for many years, a large influence over its fortunes. In his own words they "are enduring causes of its greatness and power."

These teachings upon State development relate both to local and general history, as on the Hudson River, Lake George, and Lake Champlain, extending from the St. Lawrence to the bay of New York, intersecting at right angles about mid-way by the valley of the Mohawk, and constituting the great base lines of the State. These lines are alike interesting to the State and nation, both in periods of war and times of peace. Disciplined and savage armies have passed over them. Here in a narrow and rugged valley are the divisions which separate New York and New England from the rest of the nation. Upon almost every foot of this land and water are written the struggles for American independence. They kept Burgoyne and his army, and the British Clinton and his army, "cribbed, cabined, and confined," so that there could be no union of the two opposing forces, unless it came, as attempted through the treachery of Arnold, in paid-for treason with the enemy. Northern New York more than Kentucky has been the "dark and bloody ground of the nation." French and English and savages were long upon this line. The massacre and burning of Schenectady, and the encounters at Cherry Valley, the Mohawk, Oriskany, Ticonderoga, Sackett's Harbor, Kingston, Stony Point, Frontignac, Wolfe and Montcalm, all make a part of this history; and you may trace its close connection for more than two centuries of time in war and peace.

Governor Seymour in his love of history follows in charming words the canoe of the early hunters from the Hudson to the Mohawk, and moving on from the Mohawk, by a portage around the falls of Niagara, from the tributaries of Ontario to Green Bay, the Fox, and Wisconsin, on to the Mississippi, and up the Missouri to the gorges of the Rocky Mountains. All this space of four thousand miles is now almost a common water-way for commerce, and only a single mile separates the upper waters of the Missouri from the Columbia, now reached by rail in the days of a single week.

In another direction from the Mohawk is the high-way to the St. Lawrence in one direction, and to the far, far West, and the Gulf of Mexico in another.

State and Inter-State Commerce.

State and inter-State commerce and the Erie Canal were with Governor Seymour subjects of intense interest. I may only glance at two or three of them. The chief was his constant interest in the water-ways of the State and country. Here he saw protection to the people from the increasing power of railroad corporations. He believed in nature's rivers and harbors and water-sheds for commerce, and when necessary, in canal water-ways. All of these were as familiar to him as the sources of the river near his own home, and hence his little fear of dangerous encroachments by railroads. The two systems were rather friendly than hostile, the one to be used for heavy burdens, and the other for quicker motion and lighter weight.

It was geographical position, he argued, that long ago took these highways from the French and gave them first to the British, and from the British to the United States. The Six Tribes in their wars and wide-

spread possessions had used them long before. Hannibal and Napoleon won more, he said, from the same causes than from any other; and more than anything else, it was the topography of the States that defeated the South in the rebellion.

In this State his last public words were for maintaining the great water-ways from the lakes to the Hudson, and no hundred men have said or done so much in their behalf. Born in the wilderness, a real lover of rural life, upon a great farm when he was a boy, his eyes resting in leisure and retirement upon one of the most beautiful and best cultivated valleys in the State, and believing, also, in his enthusiasm, that this Mohawk Valley had the best watershed in the land, as he saw it from the veranda of his own home, he was wont to say that the history of the continent revolved around what he thus saw before him. His home and his farm were sources of constant pleasure, and he could talk of seed-time and harvest, of crops and soil, of the dairy and grasses, of wheat and oats, fertilizers and experiments in germination of fruits, and trees, as one who had become familiar with the farm in the double advantage of experience and extensive reading.

He believed also in a complete system of education, and in his addresses at Cornell, Madison, Wells, and other universities and colleges, before the people at large, he defended this American system, as I may call it, as a part, and the best part, of the general welfare and common defence of the nation.

Our very great obligations as a State, he thought, were due to the Dutch for the support they gave to education in New Netherlands; and if New York had a better constitution at the full close of the Revolution, it was due to the fact of the schools in the colony.

One or two brief sentences let me copy from one of his university addresses as typical of the whole man: "When I see zeal without knowledge, I do not wish to quench the one but to enlarge the other. I have been willing to aid, according to my means, every church which earnestly held to the truth of its doctrines, although they were in conflict with those of the church to which I am attached. . . . I believe in men who believe in their doctrines, religious or political, and who are active and earnest in their support. I have St. Paul's abhorrence of those who are neither hot nor cold. . . . Diffused power demands diffused education. The system which makes all men members of the governing class demands higher education than the mere primary elements of learning. Power and knowledge given to the people make the element of Republicanism."

One evidence of Governor Seymour's power in Democratic Conventions was at the time of the nomination of a Judge of the Court of Appeals, when the whole body of delegates seemed to demand that Judge Denio, whose term was about to expire, should not be renominated.

The Judge had delivered an opinion, considered at the time adverse to his party, in the use of governmental commissions, as in the organization of the New York Metropolitan Police. Governor Seymour dissented from Judge Denio's opinion as strongly as any man in the convention, but in the midst of the storm against the Judge and his decision, he rose in his place and said: "I desire to renominate Hiram Denio for Judge of the Court of Appeals, not because we approve his decision—indeed I am hostile to that system of commissions, and differ with Judge Denio in his view of the law—but because we respect his office, have confidence in

his motives, and are willing to accept any statute legitimately passed and approved by the courts. I desire to renominate him, because by doing so we will demonstrate the sincerity of the Democratic party in its professions of respect for an independent judiciary." These words were simply magical, and the storm raised at first at once passed away, leaving the moral atmosphere clear and pure as truth could make it.

His Charities and Sympathies.

There is not time to speak at any length on these and kindred subjects. But it is proper to say that Governor Seymour performed many times more work for the people as a private citizen than in his official service. He believed that happy and healthy minds were made by steady and healthy work. In intelligent culture he found constant pleasure, and the little world within him saw enough in the great world without to provide objects of endless study and interest for all mankind.

His sympathies for men of toil, for teachers of art, in skilful work and in the schools were boundless. In schools and colleges, he said, instructors gave a thousand-fold more to others than they received themselves; but it was also true that men of business and labor are profitable teachers of men of learning. He found literally in his observations and studies, "good in everything." He believed with Seneca that "the things we fear are often better than those we pray for." He often quoted the very old-time lines of Sir Thomas Wyatt, where "flowers fresh and fair of hue" are seen in the midst of

> "Venomous thorns that are so sharp and keen,
> Since every woe is joined with some wealth."

I wish there was time to quote, in his own words, one thought from his Fourth of July Address to the Prisoners of Auburn in 1879, where in trying to drown in Lethean waters certain acts of his own life which caused him regret, mistakes, and sorrows, how by thought and purpose he turned all these into virtue and wisdom, just as the alchemist turns base metal into gold, making each error of the past the seeds of right until each seed blooms into fragrant flowers. The hearts of many of the prisoners were touched as by a coal of fire from the altar of God. At least there was sorrow for the crimes of the past. The orator knew that in the worst human nature it is possible at times to make the heart of stone become a heart of flesh.

An Old-school Statesman.

In the many recent deaths of eminent public men in civil life, a majority have belonged to what is known as the old school.

Governor Seymour in his culture and manners, principles and opinions, belonged to this class. He had seen old things pass away and many things become new. At the age of seventy-six the old-school men he had seen serve and die were in number as many as the visible planets. He beheld toward the end of his own life the men of the new school come into power, New England dwarfed in strength, and his own New York and the Middle States left in the rear of the grown and growing Western States. The centre of population had been changed in his time almost from Maryland to just beyond Cincinnati.

He had seen the Constitution, framed ninety-nine years ago, amended, slavery abolished, and the country at large moving on toward sixty million of people, and

his own State nearing the six million which will be its population at the close of the year 1899.

In the order of time and Providence it was time to die. But the old good nature and good old humor were very dear to Governor Seymour. There are some things in the past which cannot be improved in the present by change alone. One of these is the spirit of the old Constitution, born in the trials of the war for independence, baptized in the blood of the men who made it or died for it, christened in the experience of the full church militant, triumphant now in the Union, and after foreign wars and civil wars seen to-day in thirty-eight States, and four more knocking to come in from ten territories larger than the States now in existence. Governor Seymour believed in all this advance, and often recalled in the Farewell Address of the father of the nation, the great teacher's words upon the powers of government, the spirit of encroachment, the love of power, the proneness to abuse it, and the necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise and distribution of political authority. And he was wholly right in his frequent reference both to Washington as a national example, and to the Constitution as the supreme law of the land, and the duty of the people to respect and obey it.

Governor Seymour's War Record of 1863.

The only marked dissent from what I have said grew out of the records of 1863, when for three days in July the mob were masters of the city of New York. As brief as words will permit, I propose to place this record before you. These riots mark the deep, dark, damned spirit of the rebellion. What led to them, whether they could be avoided or not, whether it was

the number of men drafted from Democratic districts, or the time of the draft, or the method of its execution, I shall not here discuss. My purpose is to vindicate, and from personal records and from official records of those who were not the Governor's political friends (I believe he had no enemies apart from politics), his conduct during the civil war. Only those who were present in New York City know what the July riots were. To me, at the time a journalist, a proprietor and citizen, much of whose work was in the midst of the riots, in the lower part of the city, they are remembered and detested as the nightmare of my life. I recall as recently in the city of London, and in Belgium, and elsewhere, a multitude of people whom no man could number, and very many of them bent on mischief. Neither the city, the State, nor the Federal Government were prepared for the bad temper and worse conduct which the draft and its time and methods created. I felt and wrote, and still feel and say, that each man in this mob, or in any mob, is the embodiment of a kind of personal devil. The best aspect in which it can be presented is that the draft was untimely. Commencing on Saturday, the first names were published on Sunday, when there was leisure to read and think and talk of the conscription. The conviction was strong, and upon investigation it turned out to be correct, that thousands more men were to be drafted on call from New York than from New England and other States in proportion to citizens or population. This was the spark, in part, which fired the kindling of the flame which literally set the city on fire. What gave it even a form of excuse was the fact that this first draft was in the district where the excess of numbers called for was unjustifiable. If partisanship originated this wrong upon

the one side, party men naturally resented it upon the other. A portion of the press added fuel to the flames, as we all know it can when it chooses, and from the gall in the heart it put fire on the tongue. On Sunday, then, a day of anything but rest and peace, came news to the Governor of the draft in force, and to the Mayor also only the day before, and to each without notice. A private telegram of public danger hurried the Governor to the city. Monday a mob of thousands were in the streets, mad with drink and passion. Already they had sacked the provost-marshal's office, burned the block of buildings there and elsewhere, and fired the Colored Orphan Home. Neither life nor property were safe, and the Governor, in the midst of this smoke and flame and ruling passion, soon declared the city in insurrection. The Governor first heard of the danger by a private telegram on Sunday, when there was no conveyance to the city, and where he was in counsel for the safety of the harbor. Monday he came, went to the St. Nicholas Hotel to meet General Wool, Mayor Opdyke, the Collector of the Port, and others. Alarm bells were ringing; incendiaries were burning public property; plunderers were stealing, and the mob, defying all in authority, were masters of the metropolis. The hospitable landlord, alarmed for the safety of his hotel, "for God's sake" implored the Governor and Mayor to leave. They left at once and went to the City Hall to look the mob in the face.

Here timely words and action made the beginning of the end. The first step, leading to supreme authority was the enormous crowd in front of City Hall, composed of all classes of excited people, and some of them among its best citizens. For the public safety the Governor's presence was demanded. Among his words

were these: "I beg you to listen to me as a friend, for I am your friend and the friend of your families." The excited people one and all now quietly listened. The avowed and open purpose was to pour oil on the troubled waters by appealing to the common-sense of the people, mob and all. He first implored the multitude before him to disperse to their homes, and to trust to law and authority to redress any possible grievance. His chief and inward purpose by this appeal was to gain time for the State and municipal authorities to act as a unit and to save the city from further violence; and by this agency alone, in forty-eight hours, and after about one thousand of the rioters and citizens had been killed or wounded, order was restored. There was no aid from the general Government, none whatever; but the police of the city of New York, acting upon the authority of the Governor, were literally a tower of strength in the riot; and it is due to the truth of history to make this statement, and to add to it, that every well-informed man in the city now stood by the police, the Mayor of the city, and the Governor of the State. And it was for the words I have quoted, and for his conduct there and then, that Governor Seymour was charged with holding a parley with "bloody criminals and thieves."

I need not picture the condition of the city in and just before these July riots. In the absence of defences and of State troops the real danger was appalling; but Governor Seymour was neither timid nor slow to meet the crisis. He had comprehended the full danger, and meant to master it, if he could. Richmond was not so near to him as at first it was to those who had been captured, or to those who, in their cries of "On to Richmond," had regarded this advance as an easy summer-time march. McDowell, McClellan, Pope, Burn-

side, Hooker—all had tried it and found it necessary to pause until Grant and Sheridan from the east, and Sherman from the south, much later on, with thousands more men and much better prepared, opened the way to the long-beleagured city, when the rebellion melted away like snow before the sun.

In the great city in the worst peril of 1863, Governor Seymour could count among his supporters as a war Governor the President, his Secretary of War, Mayor Opdyke, the Collector of the Port, and leading citizens without number not of his own party. But the slow work, as it was called, and the least spark of independence, even if mingled with the truest patriotism, made the press, in part, merciless in its censures and criticisms.

On July 4, 1863, before the people, the Governor exhorted calm deliberation, and addressed his words to citizens of all parties. He did not then dwell upon the fact that this State was called upon to raise in all 467,047 troops, of the 2,859,132 called for by the nation. On the contrary, he issued two proclamations, showing what was meant to be done, and what at once proved most timely and effective. I quote the letter of one and the spirit of both:

"I do hereby declare the city and county of New York to be in a state of insurrection, and give notice to all persons that the means provided by the laws of this State for the maintenance of law and order will be employed, to whatever degree may be necessary; and that all persons who shall after this proclamation resist, or aid, or assist, in resisting any force ordered by the Governor to quell or suppress such insurrection, will render themselves liable to the penalty prescribed by law. HORATIO SEYMOUR."

Obedience to all legal authority, whether the law and authority were agreeable or not, was the command of the chief magistrate of the State. General Wool had been urged to declare martial law, and opposing this was removed from command. Governor Seymour believed with him that martial law would be a grave mistake, and the War Department, after special investigation by three men, two of them of its own naming, reported that the accusations against the Governor were groundless. In further answer to all charges of inefficiency of purpose, I quote just two sentences from the *Albany Journal* of this city :

" Governor Seymour in so promptly declaring the city in a state of insurrection, contributed largely to the suppression of the riot. It gave immediate legal efficiency to the military arm, and enabled the civil authorities to use that power with terrible effect. It showed, also, that it was Governor Seymour's purpose to give no quarter to the ruffians who seized upon the occasion of a popular excitement to rob and murder. The mob has been overpowered, law and order are triumphant, and the riotously disposed everywhere have received a lesson which they will not soon forget."

The number of men called for by the draft, I may now say, was one cause of the riot, and it is proper to add that after a sharp correspondence the draft was suspended, and for two reasons : one of them was the admission that fraud had been imposed upon the city of New York, and upon the city of Brooklyn by an unequal and an unjust call for the numbers to be drafted.

This excess, all in all, was about fourteen thousand men, and in the call of July, 1864, for 500,000, the excess was admitted to be 9,648. Where in New England the district draft was for 2,167, the district draft on

the same basis in New York was for 2,674 men. The Secretary of War, upon investigation, fully admitted this wrong, and for its exposure, and for State justice which in the end came from it, the State was indebted to Governor Seymour. On April 16, 1864, the Republican Assembly by resolution honorably and unanimously, thanked "Governor Seymour for his prompt and efficient efforts in procuring a correct enrolment of the State." Like unanimous votes of thanks came from the Board of Supervisors of the city, politically equally divided; from the religious body of which Archbishop Hughes was the head, and from citizens and capitalists, who had been saved the unjust taxation which should come from an over-draft of men at a time when $700 bounty was paid for each volunteer. Candor and justice often make slow pace in the world, but as we see here error of opinion and action were in the end overruled for good.

You will also remember that before the war began, Governor Seymour, and one of your now distinguished United States Senators, were sneered at as "Union savers," as if the four years' war, and all its sacrifices of life and property, leading to final peace, did not mean the saving of the Union, and was not chiefly for that purpose. The Governor simply comprehended what the South meant when the federal capital was abandoned by senators, judges, and representatives from the States south of the Potomac. Then and later on, and always, he resisted separation for all causes, and declared that all remedies for all political evils, real or alleged, were to be found in the existing Government. This faith in a united Government, I shall show, won the confidence of President Lincoln, and the full endorsement of Secretary Stanton.

In his inaugural address in January, 1863, the Governor had said: "Under no circumstances can the division of the Union be conceded." And again he said: "We will put forth every exertion of power to prevent it." And after strong words of policy, conciliation, and fraternal regard which must prevail in a common country, he adds: "We can never voluntarily consent to the breaking up of the Union of these States or the destruction of the Constitution."

In his annual message he said: "In order to uphold our Government it is also necessary that we should show respect to the authority of our rulers; where it is their duty to decide upon measures and policy, it is our duty to give a ready support to their decisions. This is a vital maxim of liberty. Without this loyalty no government can conduct public affairs with success, no people can be safe in the enjoyment of their rights."

He disapproved of arbitrary arrests, the passions and prejudices of inferior agents, the suppression of journals, and imprisonment of persons for partisan reasons, the abduction of citizens of this State, and especially at a time when the State was "sending forth great armies to protect the national capital and to save the national officials from flight or capture." His own strong words were: "I deny that this rebellion can suspend a single right of citizens of loyal States. I denounce the doctrine that civil war in the South takes away from the loyal North the benefits of one principle of civil liberty." And these burning words, the strongest ever used by Governor Seymour, within one year were in general accord with the best sentiment of the people of the State and country, and time soon proved that they were the safest for the republic

in war as in peace. They rest simply upon our common-sense nature and common-sense patriotism.

When in the summer of 1863 the Secretary of War called upon Governor Seymour for help, his answers were as prompt as the calls for aid. General Lee was in Pennsylvania, and Washington, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia were in peril. The Governor of Pennsylvania joined in the call of the Government upon this State for prompt and needed help.

June 15, 1863, came this despatch from the Secretary of War:

"Will you please inform me immediately if, in answer to a special call of the President, you can raise, and forward, say twenty thousand militia, as volunteers, without bounty, to be credited on the draft of your State, or what number you can possibly raise?

"E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*"

On the same day, June 15th, came this answer:

"I will spare no efforts to send you troops at once.

"HORATIO SEYMOUR."

At a later hour the same day this despatch was sent to the Secretary of War:

"I will order the New York and Brooklyn troops to Philadelphia at once. Where can they get arms, if any are needed? HORATIO SEYMOUR."

The same day, again, this despatch was sent to Mr. Stanton:

"We have two thousand enlisted volunteers. I will have them consolidated into companies and regiments,

and sent on at once. You must provide them with arms. HORATIO SEYMOUR."

The arms were supplied, the troops sent, and every hour, day and night, were busy hours at this capital for the prosecution of the war.

July 2d, Governor Curtin, of Pennsylvania, wrote to Governor Seymour:

"Send forth more troops as rapidly as possible. Every hour increases the necessity for large forces to protect Pennsylvania. The battles of yesterday were not decisive, and if Meade should be defeated, unless we have a large army this State will be overrun by the rebels.

"A. P. CURTIN, *Governor of Pennsylvania.*"

Two weeks later, President Lincoln and his Secretary of War thanked Governor Seymour, and through him the State of New York, for in this war the State and the Governor were a unit. These are their words:

"WASHINGTON, June 19, 1863.

"The President directs me to return his thanks to his Excellency Governor Seymour and his staff for their energetic and prompt action.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*"

Then came the request, the 21st of June, signed by the Secretary of War:

"The President desires Governor Seymour to forward to Baltimore all the militia that he can raise."

To Governor Curtin's appeal came these hopeful and emphatic words, June 18, 1863, from Governor Seymour:

"About twelve thousand men are now moving, and are under orders for Harrisburg, in good spirits, and well equipped."

And on July 2d: "Troops will continue to be sent. One regiment left to-day."

The city was now wholly defenceless. The nine fortifications in the harbor were practically without troops, and General Wool reporting this fact to the President and to the Governor, the latter, with Senator Morgan and Comptroller Robinson, looked upon the danger with bated breath. In all the nine fortifications five hundred men were present, and only half of them of the artillery. The Government ships were all at Hampton Roads. It was in this crisis, July 9th, that General Wool called upon Governor Seymour for material aid for the United States, and said to him in an official paper:

"For want of troops the city is in a defenceless condition. I require, including a regiment of heavy artillery, eight companies, composed of artillery, volunteers or militia, to be placed in the forts of this harbor. As I have no companies in the State of New York for this service, I would respectfully ask your Excellency to order four companies to be furnished as soon as practicable. JOHN WOOL, *Major-General.*"

But the correspondence thus far quoted is not first in importance. On March 23, 1863, President Lincoln wrote the following manly letter to Governor Seymour, marked "private and confidential:"

"You and I are substantially strangers, and I write chiefly that we may become better acquainted. I, for the time being, am at the head of a nation which is in great

peril, and you are at the head of the greatest State in that nation. As to maintaining the nation's life and integrity, I assume and believe there cannot be any difference of purpose between you and me. If we should differ as to the means, it is important that such difference should be as small as possible; that it should not be enhanced by unjust suspicions on the one side or the other. In the performance of my duty the co-operation of your State, as that of others, is needed, in fact it is indispensable. This alone is a sufficient reason why I should wish to be at a good understanding with you. Please write, etc. A. LINCOLN."

If you will recall the date of this letter, you will see that it was in the midst of the nation's greatest strife, and just then every day increasing. Governor Seymour received this invitation to write while the Legislature was in session—and he promised a full answer upon the "aspect of public affairs and the condition of our unhappy country" "as soon as he could be relieved from a pressure which confined him to the Executive Chamber until each midnight." His closing words, following an apology for delay in replying at once to the President, read as follows; "I assure you that no political resentment, no personal purposes, will turn me aside from the pathway I have marked out. I intend to show those charged with the administration of public affairs a due deference and respect, and to give to them a just and generous support in all the measures they may adopt within the scope of their constitutional powers. For the preservation of this Union I am ready to make any sacrifice of interest, passion, or prejudice. Truly yours,

"HORATIO SEYMOUR."

What followed in the hundred and more days of emergency in the supply of men and arms to end the rebellion, in proclamations to crush the insurrection, in words to calm the public, to support the Government as a unit, you have seen from the official records. But the end is not yet seen.

The following letter from Secretary Stanton to Governor Seymour makes its own comment:

"(CONFIDENTIAL.)

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, June 27, 1863.

"DEAR SIR: I cannot forbear expressing to you the deep obligation I feel for the prompt and cordial support you have given to the Government in the present emergency. The energy, activity, and patriotism you have exhibited I may be permitted personally and officially to acknowledge, without arrogating any personal claim on my part in such service, or to any service whatever.

"I shall be happy to be always esteemed your friend. EDWIN STANTON."

A more public letter than this, dated May 24, 1864, begged Governor Seymour "to come to Washington immediately on matters of great public interest."

Only one record more of the President's position in this year of peril, and I shall close. Ex-Senator Simon Cameron, classed as one of the President's best friends, has charged that there was a secret purpose, late in 1862 or early in 1863, using his own published words, "to bring about the ejectment of President Lincoln from the White House." Without the knowledge of the purpose of those who invited

him to visit Washington, he went there, as he says, "to meet a number of prominent men, whose real object was to find means by which the President could be impeached and turned out of office." Governor Seymour believed in this conspiracy, and believed also that the President was aware of its existence. Mr. Cameron spoke very plainly of it when, in 1878, he said: "The reasons and the plan of attack were all made known to me, and I declared to those who reported it that it was but little short of madness to interfere with the administration." Happily for the President and the country this conspiracy never ripened into the crime of treason, for just then and there it was nothing less.

And in closing the record of this war—a war of the national brotherhood of States and people in one great nation; a war without precedent in waste of life and property; a war of more than a hundred battles fought, lost, or won; a war that upon the side of the Union cost one million of people in all, and five thousand millions of dollars in money; in its results with slavery ended and peace restored in a stronger bond of union than ever before—let me say what I believe, and what I hope you will admit upon the evidence presented, that in its long and bloody history no man in the nation was found of truer devotion to the principles of constitutional government, to a nobler love of State or country, or manhood, than Horatio Seymour.

I present his name to the Legislature and people as in all respects worthy of their remembrance in these State honors; as an example to the rising generation, and as one who illustrated in his public career the text of John Milton, when he called that a complete and

generous education which fits a man to "perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices both public and private of peace and war."

If in his political life, like Solon, the man we now honor declared what a true Democracy was, like Publicola he also remembered what it meant in the practice of a well-spent life, and in the government of a great republic.

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